

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace Paragraph [0013] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0013] The current sources ~~[[50]]42~~ and ~~[[52]]44~~, respectively, bias the read element 32 during normal operation. The diodes 34, 36, 38, 40, 50, and 52 form parallel back-to-back forward-biased diode shunting circuits. The diode shunting circuits limit a maximum voltage that is applied to the read element 32 to a forward biased turn-on voltage of one of the diodes 34, 36, 38, 40, 50, or 52. The maximum voltage of the shunting circuits is typically 0.7V for silicon junction diodes and 0.4-0.5V for Schottky diodes. GMR sensors begin to experience stress at 0.6-0.7V. Therefore, the range of protection offered by the diode turn-on voltage of conventional shunting devices is usually sufficient for GMR sensors.